HUMAN HAPPINESS;

OR THE

SCEPTIC.

[Price THREE SHILLINGS.]

HUMAN HAIRLESS.

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HUMAN HAPPINESS;

OR THE

SCEPTIC.

A POEM,

IN

SIX CANTOS.

By THOMAS HOLCROFT,

AUTHOR OF DUPLICITY, A COMEDY.

——Non ſatis eſt riſu diducere rictum
Auditoris. HOR.

La Nature eſt donné aux Philoſophes comme un grand énigme, où chacun donne ſon ſens dont il fait ſon principe. ROCHEFOUCAULT.

LONDON:

Printed for L. DAVIS, Holborn; J. ROBSON, New Bond-Street; J. JOHNSON, St. Paul's Church-Yard; J. SEWELL, Cornhill; J. FIELDING, Paternoſter-Row; and J. STOCKDALE, Piccadilly.

MDCCLXXXIII.

HUMAN HAPPINESS:

BRITISH MUSEUM

CANTO I.

ONCE on a time two certain men,
No matter much for where and when;
(Sir Thomas one, plain William t'other,
A ſecond couſin by the mother;
Something between a friend and ſervant,
Of titles and reſpects obſervant;)
Were got in philoſophic chat,
Of pro and con, and this and that;
Concerning man, his occupations,
Purſuits and pleaſures, plagues and paſſions:
The firſt of whom this doctrine vented,
NO MAN WAS EVER YET CONTENTED.
The Knight, who held th' affirmative,
If we may babbling Fame believe,

Tho' no great ſcholar, knew your Greek A,
Alpha, and ſo forth, to Omega;
Had fables read of beaſts and birds,
Some reaſon ſpoke, and many words;
Saw cauſe and conſequence combin'd,
And watch'd the emotions of the mind:
Was held, in ſhort, for one of thoſe,
Who know their navel from their noſe;
And, tho' he had not read Confucius,
Could feel if pinch'd by old or new ſhoes.
The other, whom we William chriſten'd,
Spoke much the loudeſt when he liſten'd.
In many caſes men of ſenſe
Know ſilence is good eloquence;
And he who means to keep his patron,
Muſt unmoleſted let him chatter on;
Muſt patient ſit, and hear his quoth-ing,
And get prefer'd for ſaying nothing.
For your dependant, like your pointer,
Should neither tongue nor limb nor joint ſtir,
But, all attentive, crouch and watch,
Obedient ev'ry ſignal catch,
'Till you've diſcharg'd your Wit;--ſure token
He then may wag his tail and open.
William was but a coadjutor,
Sir Thomas was chief prolocutor.

He, half in earneſt, half in jeſt,
As uppermoſt ideas preſt,
Emotions various could provoke;—
Read how he thought, and what he ſpoke,
I ſay, friend William, nay I ſwear,
The world's not worth a wiſe man's care;
Not worth, though you hold life a bleſſing,
Fatigue of dreſſing and undreſſing:
Not worth, believe me, honeſt Will,
The pain of ſwallowing a pill.
Nay, life is, and I think the figure
Will give my argument ſome vigor,
A dream of phantaſies and lies,
Which no man wakes from till he dies:
Or rather, ſtill to ſpeak profounder,
From which he wakes by ſleeping ſounder:
A nauſeous draught that's never ſwallow'd,
Or by ſucceeding potions follow'd,
An everlaſting, bitter bolus;
Diſguis'd to cheat, or to condole us:
So, William, till you're laid in hearſe,
I lie not, tho' I ſpeak in verſe,
You'll have ſome loathſome pois'nous pill,
That ſhall diſguſt your palate ſtill.
Pray, tell me, what's this boaſted man,
But ſome boy's top, or vixen's fan?

By paſſion flirted, torn, and hurl'd,
And ſpun and whipt about the world;
This way and that, now there now here,
Set up and laſh'd by Hope and Fear;
For ſome new gewgaw ever panting,
Enjoying nothing, all things wanting;
Never content with drink and meat,
Sufficient for himſelf to eat,
But all he can monopolizes,
And picks and culls and gormandizes,
Then wallows in th' exhauſtleſs ſlough,
Yet ne'er ſuſpects he has enough;
Has ſomething further to deſire,
If yeoman now, he'd next be 'Squire;
When 'Squire a Lord, when Lord a King,
When that why he'd be every thing!
Would graſp the globe, and for a ſocket
Compreſs and put it in his pocket.
But could he all things thus command,
Chang'd into ſtone, he'd lifeleſs ſtand,
By Vis Inertiæ's magic wand.
For only can the Puppet move,
Play'd by the wire of dear ſelf-love;
When It ſome pleaſure would obtain,
Or when 'twould run away from pain.

They make It caper, ſimple Fool,
Like elephant at dancing-ſchool;
Pain heats the floor, and flogs like Beadle,
While Madam Pleaſure plays the fiddle.
Shew me the man, or ſmall or great,
With kingdoms, or without eſtate;
A buyer, ſeller, loſer, winner,
Philoſopher, or ſaint, or ſinner,
No matter for his youth or age,
Whether he's ſimple or he's ſage,
Of temp'rate or of torrid region,
Or what his colour or religion;
Shew me the man, throughout the earth,
Who, 'tween his burial and his birth,
Could truly ſay he did poſſeſs
A day of perfect happineſs.
William, obſerve, I mean to prove
Our minds are ſo diſpos'd to rove,
So much is Fancy giv'n to gadding,
For this thing or for that ſtill madding,
Impetuous after ſome new toy,
She never gives you time t' enjoy
What God and Induſtry have ſent,
But makes your life continual Lent;
So eager is ſhe in purſuit,
She plucks and throws away the fruit;

Or ſay ſhe ſhould ſit ſtill awhile,
For half an hour, or half a mile,
'Tis not her nature to be quiet;
And, ſo capricious is her diet,
A go-cart child, or woman breeding,
Is not more whimſical in feeding;
Nor can your wheedling, or your flogging,
Keep her conſiſtent in her progging.
Quoth Will, Sir Thomas, how ſhall I
To ſuch ſound arguments reply?
Your oratory is ſo good,
I think it cannot be withſtood;
Yet, ſomething which your Worſhip ſaid
Started a hint, if 'tis not fled,
Which I'll purſue, under correction,
And not by way of contradiction;
I were an aſs to think of that—
Your Worſhip's words come in ſo pat,
Your figures fall ſo very thick,
Like plumbs in pudding, Sir, they ſtick;
You've ſuch abundant rhetoric
You've learnt by rote all Ariſtotle.
I ſay then life is like a bottle,
Which, when uncork'd, is full of liquor
That may be emptied ſlow or quicker,

In gentle ſtreams, or rude inflations,
Impell'd by ſoft or boiſt'rous paſſions.
This bottle, likewiſe, may contain
Bad vinegar, or good Champagne;
(That is, to ſhew the figure fit,
A Miſanthrope, or man of wit)
Hungary water, fine and clear,
Or muddy, ſtale, and flat ſmall-beer;
Your ſubtile ſpirits, or your mighty,
Your aqua fortis, aqua vitæ;
Your fiery ſpirits, or your placid,
Your cordial, or corroding acid;
With many more, that I can't think of,
Which men and maids do daily drink of.
Whence I dare undertake to trace
The likeneſs of all human race—
And, firſt, there's bawd and brandy face.
Which metaphor more meaning holds
Than the firſt glance, perhaps, unfolds;
For, I dare ſay, you'll own, Sir Thomas,
When luſt and liquor overcome us,
Tho' ſweet to taſte as barley-ſugar,
When ſlily ta'en in hugger-mugger,
Alike the brandy and the bawd,
Will man of health and fame defraud.

Hold,

Hold, hold, friend William, ſaid the Knight,
Pull up your horſe, and take me right:
Tho' drunkenneſs and fornication
Are vices, paſt all diſputation,
Which, when indulg'd, deſerve reciſion;
Yet, with Morality's permiſſion,
I ſometimes love my thirſt to quench,
And, ſure, I love a pretty wench!
Better by far that niggard Fate
Should man at once annihilate,
And out of Nature's reg'ment drum us,
Than take that firſt of pleaſures from us.
Shall I, when the kind turtle's willing,
Forego the dear delight of billing?
When on my breaſt her head reclines,
And while my eager arm entwines
Around her ſlender yielding waiſt,
Then, when embracing, and embrac'd;
When I behold, impatient grown,
Her ſwelling boſom up and down
Impaſſion'd heave, and pant, and ſigh,
Then, when ten thouſand tranſports lie
Within her half-clos'd liquid eye;
Of pleaſure then ſhall I be flam'd?
No, if I am, may I be d——d.

In

In ſuch a dear, delightful ſeaſon,
Shall I aſk leave of madam Reaſon?
A prim, preciſe, fanatic prude,
That bawls out rape if you are rude;
That cants and whines, and prays and preaches,
And hates both petticoats and breeches;
That, with reſpect to loco-motions,
Has ſuch affected, queaſy notions,
Tho' mother Church ſhould grant commiſſion,
She'd turn her noſe up at co-t--n.
For my part, I muſt freely own,
So much have I the fleſh and bone
Of father Adam in me cas'd,
When th' apple's offer'd I muſt taſte;
And 'tis, indeed, my firm opinion
You'd do the very ſame, my minion.
For as for Joſeph, whom the Jews
Pretend th' Egyptian did refuſe,
I place it to the lies o' th' nation,
Or elſe an error in tranſlation;
Becauſe, if you will pleaſe to look
In Matthew, Chronicles, or Luke,
You'll find, without much pains or pother,
How faſt theſe Jews begat each other:
And howſoe'er 't may be reviſ'd,
There's but one way to get a child.

The ſeventh and tenth of Nehemiah
Will, likewiſe, prove that man a liar
Who ſhould pretend that th' Iſraelites
Forbore to celebrate Love's rites;
And Solomon, in all his glory,
Took vaſt delight in rony tory;
On which he made ſo ſweet a ſong,
A man might ſing it all day long.

Again, friend William, know we not,
How ſons and daughters were begot
By Iſaac, Abraham, and Lot?
And, *entre nous*, if I may hint
What may be each day read in print,
'Twas ſometimes done, to make it ſnugger,
In your ſaid way of hugger mugger;
For brother, ſiſter, father, daughter,
Would eat a cherry, if chops did water.

It was by this kind of homogeny
King Priam had ſo vaſt a progeny;
And have not all ſucceeding ages
Follow'd th' example of theſe ſages?
In ſhort, the buſineſs muſt be done,
Or how ſhould father come by ſon?
And, ſince it can't be done by proxy,
Duke muſt have Dutcheſs, or a doxy.

Were

Were theſe things held in perſecution,
'Twould overturn the Conſtitution;
For how can he be call'd a free man
Who's not allow'd to have a leman?
William, who found he'ad trod o'th' corns
Of Letchery, drew in his horns;
And, while Sir Thomas gave the rein,
Wholly ſalacious, half profane,
To this his twittle twattle vein,
Knowing his humour to a hair,
Friend William took a different air;
And often ſimper'd at the joke
Ere it was underſtood, or ſpoke:
And, for he knew 'twould pleaſe the Knight,
At certain places laugh'd outright;
Then, when the orator had ſpun
His wit, as far as it would run,
Reply'd, in recantation quaint,
I don't pretend, Sir, I'm a ſaint.
No, if you did, rejoin'd the Knight,
You'd be a ſcoundrel hypocrite.
Nor are there many people fonder
Than I, ſaid Will, of *double entendre*;
Provided it be done quite clean,
And fools can't find out what you mean.

Your Worſhip has that happy knack;
You're decent, yet retain a ſmack—
You ſlily draw ſome odd alluſion,
Yet look as grave as a Carthuſian.
And then each hint ſo clean convey'd is,
You're quite a fav'rite with the ladies:
They always love a merry man,
Who makes them laugh behind their fan.
Thoſe whom your implications bit,
Forgive the ſin for ſake o' th' wit;
Nor ever dream of rods in pickle,
When metaphors their fancies tickle
Concerning things which all folks dote on,
But yet which can't be ſpoke, or wrote on,
Except it be the way you wote on.

When Will thought proper thus to knuckle,
The Knight, forthwith, began to chuckle;
It put him in a merry mood,
To find his wit was underſtood:
Then ſtrait, with jocund heart and phraſe,
Retorted back friend William's praiſe.
For, though he wanted not for ſenſe,
He, like his neighbours, could diſpenſe
With all the flattery folks could ſpare,
And more, indeed, than was his ſhare.

I've often ſaid, both here and hence,
Couſin, you've more than common ſenſe;
Tho' faith, I cannot chuſe but ſmile,
And well I may, to think that while
After Miſs Tickle-tail we ran,
The theme on which we firſt began
Is ſo far loſt, in this digreſſion
We muſt ſnuff hard to ſcent the queſtion.
Howe'er, I'm glad our evagation,
With theſe free hints on fecundation,
Are but by way of converſation.
For, were they meant t' appear in print,
Tho' I, inſtead of fleſh, were flint,
I would not feel the gooſe-quill rod,
No, not for fifty pounds by ——.
Which Critic would remorſeleſs thwack,
With iteration, on my back.
True, Will replied; but here you know, Sir,
Theſe ſlips for little or nothing go, Sir;
The preſent error's this—your bent
Has overturn'd your argument:
You've prov'd, at leaſt while veins are ſappy,
We're very often very happy.
Thanks for the hint, return'd the Knight—
Inſtead of wrong, I find I'm right;

I've

I've no digreſſion made, my friend,
For now moſt firmly I contend,
It to the argument rejoin'd is,
Becauſe, I find, the caſe in point is;
And, though my fancy, overheated,
This as a ſolid bleſſing treated,
A very little recollection
Will ſhew us all its imperfection.
Thus—what we call the greateſt pleaſure,
And value ſo above all meaſure,
So ſmall a portion of our time
Employs, when even in our prime,
And makes one look ſo fooliſh after,
Fit ſubject or of ſcorn or laughter;
'Twould puzzle a Grecian orator
To prove it worthy living for.
Or, ſhould you urge, more than in doing,
The pleaſure lies in the purſuing,
This, I aver, doth moſt provoke us,
Becauſe it's all meer hocus pocus.
Delights may twinkle in your eye,
Num'rous as candles in the ſky;
(Which, your Aſtronomers do hold,
Strange as it ſeems, may all be told)
But people find, whene'er they marry,
Their Hymen's heav'n not half ſo ſtarry.

Ma'am

Ma'am Venus, ever in mutation,
Gives moſt light at her elongation;
Our Venus too, without a ſcoff,
Shines brighteſt when ſhe's fartheſt off;
For Bel a wife, and Bel a maid,
Are oppoſite as light and ſhade.
Your women, when in hopes of wivery,
Appear as they were carv'd of ivory;
And, though we ſee they carry noſes,
They ſurely ſmell to nought but roſes;
But, when unloos'd the virgin zone is,
Your alabaſter fleſh and bone is:
Your maid of ſnow, ſome ſhort time a'ter,
Melts into frothy muddy water.
Will, who the Knight's warm temper knew,
Look'd as he thought the ſatire true;
But heard, like Diſputant o'erthrown,
His arguments, and b'liev'd his own.
Suppos'd the cap might fit a ſlattern,
But was no univerſal pattern;
For, from moſt women he ſurvey'd,
Whether a widow, wife, or maid,
He deem'd their wit, and form, and features,
Had made them moſt bewitching creatures.

CANTO II.

QUOTH William, Sir, the queſtion reſts
Concerning human happineſs;
The which I think you would deny
That it exiſts—I don't know why—
Eſpecially when I reflect
On all the riches, and reſpect,
The parks, the tenements, and manors,
The titles, anceſtry, and honours,
With every other worldly bleſſing,
All which I ſee you, Sir, poſſeſſing.
Pſhaw, William, you're a ſimple tony,
Becauſe you're poor, you think that money
Will exorciſe each human evil,
And ſend it packing to the Devil;

That nothing could excite your cares,
But want, or ſickneſs, or grey hairs:
You'll find, friend William, to your coſt,
You've reckon'd here without your hoſt.
You little know the freaks and fancies,
The ups and downs, and pranks and prances
Of Miſs Imagination's mare,
When friſking forth to take the air:
Not troops of witches, or of fairies,
Sailing to ſup on dead man's gizzard,
With Lapland or Norwegian wizard,
On broom-ſticks e'er had ſuch vagaries;
Or winc'd and winnied, cut and caper'd,
Half like this Lady, when ſhe's vapor'd.

This, William, as you may divine,
Is no diſcovery of mine;
'Tis known in every king's dominion,
That happineſs is but opinion;
But ſince the ſubject has been ſtarted,
Somewhat, perhaps, may be imparted,
Tho' we in whiffling ſqualls do ſail,
Of whim, or humour, wit, or tale,
Of ſatire, argument, or pathos,
Shall ſteer us clear of quickſand bathos.

T' exemplify what I aſſert,
Once more to Fancy we'll revert;

To Fancy, that capricious Goddeſs,
Who plays ſuch pranks with human bodies.
You've read, no doubt, for who has not?
Who reads not Pope? Or has forgot,
She once ſuppos'd herſelf a pot?
(In which a Lady made her tea,
Or ſlily kept her ratafia)
This arm a kimbo, that ſtretch'd out,
She call'd the handle and the ſpout;
And moſt devoutly begg'd and pray'd
Not to be waſh'd by careleſs maid,
Leſt ſhe, in action of ablution,
Should ſuffer total diſſolution;
Deeming, full ſure, a broken pate,
Were mortal in that fragile ſtate.
Another time, as authors tell ye,
She call'd herſelf a currant jelly;
And ſquatted, crouching, quivering, quaking,
Imploring in moſt piteous taking,
When haunch of ven'ſon chanc'd to meet her,
No hungry Alderman might eat her.
A third ſtrange whimwham, pray Sir note,
She once crept down a cobler's throat,
And there the curſt, fantaſtic vixen
The ſimple fellow play'd her tricks on;

Swearing, in phraſes moſt unhallow'd,
Poor Criſpin had his lapſtone ſwallow'd;
And preſs'd ſo hard upon his liver,
And took ſuch oaths, good God forgive her,
And told ſuch lies, all to convince
The brain of our diſtemper'd prince;
That, had he been or Turk or Jew,
He muſt have thought the thing were true.
Another time, as I've heard ſay,
She ſwore ſhe was a truſs of hay,
And told, in wailings and alaſſes,
How ſhe was prey'd upon by aſſes;
Tho' here, ſome add, this piece of fun,
Was but contriv'd for ſake o'th' pun.
But I deſpair to think of half
The tricks ſhe acts to make you laugh.
Sometimes ſhe mounts into the head
Of ſome poor wretch, before half mad;
There his weak intellect abuſes,
And ſwears, by G—, ſhe's one o'th' Muſes;
And, tho' before he did not know it,
Himſelf is, out of doubt, a poet.
Then you ſhall ſee him ſtamp and ſtare,
And look as wiſe as Moſs's mare,
And beat his brow, and curſe his fate,
And rub his eyes, and ſcratch his pate,

And beg and pray his Polyhymnia,
To pleaſe to grant a rhyme to chimney;
Then ſtrait unbuttons he his doublet,
To hammer out unmeaning couplet;
About it and about it lingers,
And counts his feet upon his fingers;
But tho' his thoughts run muſic-ally,
He cannot ſomehow make 'em tally;
Tho' fifty Loves and Doves are there,
Not any two of them will pair.
He ſtudies, dozes, twirls his thumbs,
And when, at laſt, the butter comes,
Enraptur'd at the lucky hit,
And all amaz'd at his own wit,
Without the help of toe or tarſus,
He's at the top of Mount Parnaſſus.
Thus, whilſt this moſt inſidious jade
The ſimple fellow would perſuade
That he's the only man i' th' moon,
And all the world ſhall know it ſoon;
That ſhe'll provide him better forage,
And give him plumbs to put in's porridge;
Likewiſe, or elſe it ſhall be curſt hard,
Will ſend him mutton to his muſtard;
That woodcock, ortolan, and chicken
Are ready roaſted for his picking;

Thus,

Thus, while he waddles up Fame's ladder,
As empty and as big as bladder,
Inflated and poſſeſs'd by legion,
And thinks he ſoon ſhall reach the region,
Where he'll p-ſs down, while they adore him,
On all that ever went before him,
Inſtead of finding he's more glorious
Than Bantam King, of fame notorious;
The d---d, inſidious, ſly ſuborner
Hath pill'ried him in poet's cornier.

Sometimes the wicked huſſy ſteals
Into the head, or rather heels,
Of a dull cit, or weak patrician,
And, lo! behold a politician!
See how he runs about the town,
Cries this man up, and that man down;
Gives tongue and toe eternal action,
The buſieſt loudeſt tool of Faction;
Harangues at taverns, mounts the table,
With piteous phiz, prognoſticable,
Foretels a fact—by way of fable;
(He had it from a wiſe Phry-gian)
As how an aſs *may* ſpurn a lion.
Thus makes his ſenſeleſs hearers ſtare,
In hopes next night to fill the chair.

Thus,

Thus, having firſt pull'd up his breeches,
Unloads moſt lamentable ſpeeches
From belly warehouſe, where they lie
Pack'd up and ſtow'd, all cut and dry;
Then wipes his eyes, and eke his noſe,
And weeps his bleeding country's woes;
For if ſo be, as how, becauſe ——
He's one o'th' guardians of her laws;
And then the beetle-brain'd rebuker
Abjures all filthy luſt of lucre;
And ſwears ſo fervently he's honeſt,
He almoſt thinks himſelf in earneſt;
Then propheſies, like Jeremiah,
Till he makes all his hearers cry, ah!
Tells how the people are abus'd,
What places, penſions, he refus'd;
Of trade declin'd, ſupplies miſpent,
How farmers cannot pay their rent;
How, what is moſt to be lamented,
Not one in fifty's repreſented;
How 'tis our duty to combine,
T' eradicate or countermine
Prerogative, ſince all may ſee
Men who are govern'd can't be free;
How, 'mong a people wiſe and brave,
The King ſhould be the only ſlave;

How,

How, might he carry on the farce,
He'd ſtrip him bare as a bird's a--ſe
Of ſceptres, crowns, and glories gariſh,
And ſend him packing to his pariſh.
Then vents he mouthfuls of big breath,
Of traitors, Tower-hill and death;
So many necks has he to ſtretch,
You'd think th' infatuated wretch
Were Lord Chief Juſtice--or Jack Ketch.
Not Welch itſelf, by Welchmen utter'd,
Was e'er with more vehemence ſputter'd;
His words ſo ſinge you as they ſally,
You'd ſwear he'd wildfire in his belly;
Or that the hiſſing, quacking gander
Maintain'd, incog, a ſalamander.
But ſhould you from theſe fumes of reaſon
Subtract hems, epithets, and treaſon;
Of all this wond'rous waſte of brains
You'd quickly find that nought remains.
Friend William, didſt thou e'er behold
A flock of ſheep, pent in a fold?
And didſt thou ſee, when thou wert gazing,
The ſhepherd turn them out a grazing?
If ſo, thou couldſt not chuſe but note
How ſtupidly, within their cote,

Like

Like wond'ring clown with---oh la-a!
Theſe ſheep have ſtood and bleated Ba!
And how they wanted, 'mid their moping,
The inſtinct to begin eloping;
How they'd not ſtir a ſingle foot,
'Till crook or cur had ſet 'em to't.
But, when the firſt had paſs'd the hurdle,
A man of Gotham might as ſoon
Forth from a fiſh-pond rake the moon
As keep them in their twiggen girdle.
William, juſt ſo, your patriot ſheep
Will from their torpid ſtupor leap,
And bound o'er every proper fence
Of law, of loyalty, and ſenſe,
Soon as ſome knave, adroit and knowing,
Has ſet the ſtupid flock agoing.
This, William, give me leave to ſay,
Of all the whims in Fancy's pate,
Will moſt to wickedneſs betray
Thoſe whom it ſhall contaminate.
And yet, methinks, I've heard you plead,
Said Will, as tho' it were your creed,
With wond'rous force of elocution,
In favour of the conſtitution;
As tho' you would gain proſelytes,
To ſtruggle for the people's rights;

Have heard you vow, with iteration,
Indeed, with awful imprecation,
To ſee them violated, rather,
With your own hand, you'd ſtab your father!

Ay, quick return'd the impetuous Knight,
May plagues and perils infinite,
May ev'ry peſt Hell could ſupply
O'erwhelm my houſe and me, if I,
Tho' I deteſt the horrid fact,
Would not this tragedy enact
E'er ſee,—howe'er th' accurſed crime were mourn'd,
E'er ſee—the Conſtitution overturn'd!

But, when a Monarch fills the throne,
Whom even Faction's ſelf muſt own,
Is anxious ſtill in Virtue's cauſe,
And holds inviolate thoſe laws,
Which are the comments of his pow'r;
His guide, his ſword, his ſhield, his tow'r;
A Monarch merciful and juſt,
Who ſo reveres his ſacred truſt,
That, rather than o'erſtep the mound
By which he's circumſcrib'd and bound,
He patient hears, audacious grown,
The traitor's ſpeech approach the throne;
Forgets, to gain his people's love,
Revenge, which Pity would approve;

Feels the black hand of Malice preſs
With tenfold weight, nor ſeeks redreſs;
But takes the nobleſt way to Fame,
Abhorrent of the tyrant's name——
When virtues ſuch as theſe preſide,
Shall I with venom'd tongue deride?
Or labour, with unhallow'd hand,
To ſow diſſenſion thro' the land?
Shall I become a nation's ſcourge,
With frontleſs, damn'd ambition urge
An ignorant and headſtrong rage,
And every knave and fool engage,
To bawl for me, and ſpread ſedition,
Regardleſs of mankind's perdition,
And, for ſome partial, private good,
Plunge thus a weeping world in blood;
Tear the poor peaſant from his home,
And ſend the widow to the tomb;
Nations make waſte and defolate,
That once were happy, rich, and great?
Oh! curſt! oh, doubly curſt, be he,
Who, thus, from human pity free,
Diſclaiming Nature's ſocial ties,
Deaf to a ſuffering people's cries,
Sinks millions, that himſelf may riſe!

Gives War and Devaſtation birth,
And hurls Deſtruction o'er the earth.
My heart's appall'd! My blood runs cold!
Methinks, affrighted, I behold
Inſatiate Rage, by Diſcord led,
Where Faction ſhakes her ſnaky head!
The yell of Death howls in my ear!
Lo! brother's blood their hands beſmear!
Their garments dy'd in matron's gore,
By children ſlain whom once they bore!
Vain are the virgin's ſtreaming eyes,
The groans of age, and orphan's cries;
No help the mother's ſhrieks obtain,
The kneeling wife implores in vain;
Where Rape defil'd her ſacred bed,
Her huſband mangled lies, and dead!
No tears could ſtay th' impending blow,
Fell Diſcord mocks at human woe;
Remorſeleſs gives the fatal ſtab,
And views the vital fountain ebb;
Beholds the writhing infant die,
Hears Nature utter her laſt cry;
Reviews the havoc ſhe has made,
Her proweſs, arm, and clotted blade;
Exults, recounts each mortal thruſt,
Each act of carnage and of luſt;

With horrid pleaſure ſucks the parting breath,
Then flies to ſeek new ſcenes of blood and death!
  Theſe are thy deeds, from thee they ſprung;---
Thy ranc'rous heart and clam'rous tongue,
Oh Faction! moſt accurſed fiend!
War, Diſcord, Slaughter, Rage conven'd;
Bad'ſt them, their helliſh flags unfurl'd,
Proclaim thee Miſtreſs of the World.
  Oh William, could a ſingle hand
But drive that Dæmon from the land---
Were it---but ah, the wiſh is vain,
A tyrant's veins the ſteel may drain,
A Demagogue is never ſlain;
For while the fire funereal flaſhes,
A hundred riſe from forth his aſhes.
  But let us quit the diſmal theme;
'Tis painful William in th' extreme:
This, only, I intreat you'll note,
Not one example I can quote
More firmly proves my firſt poſition---
That is, the hapleſs inhibition
Which Fancy lays, or more or leſs,
On what's call'd human happineſs.
When Paſſions, violent as theſe,
Once on the reſtleſs boſom ſeize,
Labours, vexations, cares, and fears
Increaſe, ſtill, with encreaſing years.

CANTO III.

NOW let us once again proceed,
With Madam Fancy, and her breed
Of airy viſions in the brain:
But this much let me firſt explain;
I can't perhaps at all times ſtay
The application to convey,
If with the ſubject I ſhould wax warm.---
Take this, then, as a general axiom:
There's not an inſtance I ſhall cite,
Of Miſs Imagination's flight,
But tends to prove how, more or leſs,
She cheats us of our happineſs.
Remember this, and be aware on't,
For tho' it often ſeem apparent,

That

That ſhe on ſome delight is feeding,
Or is with joy and pleaſure breeding,
She ſwells, as preſently you'll find,
Either with water, or with wind;
Or elſe, with many a ſtrange contortion,
Brings forth an embrio in abortion.
The only comfort ſhe is ſkill'd in
Is that fine art call'd Caſtle-building:
Purſuing which, ſometimes, ſhe'll riſe
Ten thouſand leagues above the ſkies;
And, ere you'd empty Mah'met's pitcher,
Find fifty thouſand whims bewitch her;
There will the buſy brain-ſick fool
Among th' immortals place her ſtool:
But, on ſo tickliſh a foundation,
The ſlighteſt jog of pain, or paſſion,
Strait tumbles down my anti-mentor,
Ten thouſand leagues below the center.
Should you demand the reaſon why
She ſinks ſo low, and ſoars ſo high,
Is ſtrong yet feeble, quick yet ſlow,
I'll tell you, William---when I know.
Anon, invited by the weather,
She'll perch upon an oſtrich feather;
Whence ſhe'll perſuade, with wheedling air,
Some maid to pin it in her hair:

And there, to pay her thanks and duty,
She ſits and forms the line of beauty;
Waves, curtſies, nods, and bows, to pleaſe
Each well-dreſs'd paſſenger ſhe ſees;
Hoping to find that man in diſ-treſs
Who does not long to kiſs her miſtreſs.
And, ſhould the dear bewitching maid
But take her to a Maſquerade,
Or jig her tail down at a Court dance,
She ſwells to ſee her own importance!

The poſture which you put your lip in
Tells me you think you've caught me tripping:
That, vice verſa to my plan,
I'm proving now my gooſe a ſwan.
But, though you think you're Signior Sly-boots,
I'm coming with a pair of dry puts.

And, firſt, friend William, pray declare,
Had Fancy coax'd the gentle fair
Some ſocial duty to ſuſtain,
Inſtead of bidding her be vain
And ogle ev'ry petit maitre,
Had not her pleaſure been much greater?

Again—pray did you never find,
From obſervations on your mind,
When you've been dup'd into applauſe,
By crowns and ſceptres made of ſtraws,

Have ran to ſeize, hot and impetuous,
Some whiz-gig of an ignis-fatuus---
Have call'd a council on your cloaths,
And plac'd a patch beſide your noſe,
That you might rival certain beaus---
To prove yourſelf the drunkard's match,
Have clapt and chorus'd ev'ry catch---
And roar'd, and been damnation jolly,
Leſt you had been outdone in folly---
When back conducted, by reflection,
To reaſon, and to recollection;
I ſay, with moſt abundant gall,
Abjur'd you not the midnight brawl?
Deplor'd you not your time thus fled,
At ev'ry throbbing of your head?
And curſt, in ev'ry various ſhape,
The fops and fools you ſtrove to ape?

While ſtrenuous, thus, Sir Thomas pleads,
Will ſmiles aſſent—the Knight proceeds.

Sometimes our minx, of grandeur vain,
Is ſeated in a lady's train,
While fops behind, and fops before,
Surround, attend her, and adore;
And, with a civet cat's aſſiſtance,
The rabble keep at awful diſtance.

There,

There, like our Monarch, heav'n bleſs him,
When Common-council-men addreſs him,
She hears with dignity their ſpeeches,
With mildneſs anſwers each demand,
Then ſtrait preſents her lady's hand,
And bids them kiſs, and grow like leeches.
Or, rather, like, with cannon's rouſe,
The King proceeding to the Houſe:
For thus, with mien majeſtical,
She ſpreads the flowing garment round,
And, as it ſlowly ſweeps the ground,
Is drawn in ſtate along the Mall.
But if, her reaſon to recall,
A little rain ſhould chance to fall,
Aſham'd of her fantaſtic feats,
She ſhrinks, and hides her in the plaits;
Moſt curſedly chagrin'd to hear,
Miſs Daggletail hiſs in her ear.
Oft, with *ad inquirendum* big,
She ſquats down on a Judge's wig,
And hears, with moſt affected patience,
Rejoinders bully replications;
Thinks it behoveth her to ſtay,
Tho' 'twere 'till reſurrection day,
Moſt ſolemnly to hear 'em argu' on—
But, tir'd at laſt of law and jargon,

She tells my Lord its very late,
Or, tickling, makes him ſcratch his pate,
And ſhake his well-fill'd wig about her;
Then ſkulks off in a ſhower of powder.

In graceful ſhape, you'll ſometimes ſee her,
Pendant at Miſs or Madam's ear,
Sit bragging how ſhe has the art
To deck that unimportant part;
To prove which farther ſtill ſhe goes,
And bobs about a Banyan's noſe:
But, if a cold ſhould ſeize her vaſſal,
And rheum ſhould run down ſewer naſal,
No dog more ſimple phyz e'er put on,
When he was bid beware of mutton.

Of this ſee more, if you deſire,
Cantus Secundus, Matthew Prior,
Who, to his moſt harmonious lyre,
Sang ſomething like the preſent ſong,
And ſang ſo various, ſweet, and long,
I'm troubled, with my notes jejune,
To keep from ſtrumming Matthew's tune.

Obſerve, my friend, before my next
Remark, I chuſe to change my text;
I chuſe to call our old parole,
IMAGINATION, NOW, THE SOUL.

The dictionary ſearch, you'll find
SOUL is ſynonimous to MIND;
And MIND is with IMAGINATION
The ſame thing held, throughout the nation.
And ſeeing, Will, I ſpeak in rhyme
Of ſubjects vulgar and ſublime,
I'll wreſt the word, or phraſe, to *my* ſenſe,
That is---I'll take poetic licence.
I tergiverſe, as you ſhall ſee,
But let that reſt 'tween you and me,
To introduce a ſimilie.
The body's an ingenious houſe;
The ſoul—a ſort of little mouſe,
That through ſome chink, or cranny, enters,
And ſeldom into day-light ventures;
But duly takes her midnight ramble,
In zig-zag motions---ſkimble ſkamble:
Is found nocturnally eloping,
Whene'er the door (the mouth) is open;
And ſcuds and gibbers in the glades,
To fright your clowniſh men and maids;
And friſks and glides about the bed,
And often makes my Lady dread
She hears a thief---or ſees a ſprite,
And ring her bell, and ſtrike a light;

When ſtrait the cauſe of all her fears
Jumps down her throat, and diſappears.
This mouſe herſelf, both day and night,
Is alſo often in a fright;
For, not to mention mynheer rat,
She ſwoons if you ſhould name a cat.
By rat and cat, no doubt, you ween;
I Hope and Fear, friend William, mean:
Who keep ſuch watch, o'er madam's diet,
She ſcarce can mump a cruſt in quiet;
But goes with divers fears and pains to't,
Although ſhe's hid behind the wainſcot.
And though the foe's not under arms,
She's always ſubject to alarms.
For why? ſhe oft has felt their claws,
When fartheſt, as ſhe deem'd, from paws;
And when ſhe thought to lick her chaps,
Has many times been caught in traps
When leaſt ſhe dreamt of ſuch miſhaps.

CANTO IV.

MY ſimilie is at an end;
To Fancy we'll return, my friend.
Sometimes ſhe'll take it in her head,
To ſit and muſe among the dead;
And then, before your eye could twinkle,
She'll hop to th' charnel-houſe, and ſprinkle
Some favorite friend's unconſcious bones,
And hear again his dying groans;
And kiſs his lips, and catch his ſighs,
And cleanſe his brow, and cloſe his eyes;
And wring her hands, and rend her hair,
In all the horrors of deſpair:
As when ſhe caught his parting breath,
In the laſt agonies of death.

Nor

Nor are ſuch griefs to her ideal;
With Fancy every thing is real:
Which gives occaſion to your ſceptic,
Or, rather, to herſelf, to deem,
From theſe emotions epileptic,
That ſhe exiſts but in a dream.
That ſoul and body, matter and ſpirit,
With all which men think they inherit,
To which they give ſuch fond reception,
Is nothing but a meer deception.
I can't, ſaid William, I proteſt,
Conceive ſuch things, except in jeſt,
Have ever enter'd mortal head;
Have ever, yet, been ſung, or ſaid.
Then, pray inform me, by what token, Sir,
I ſhall gain certainty, fair ſpoken, Sir,
Replied Sir Thomas: or what ſign
Shall bring conviction, friend of mine,
That I am now with you debating,
And 'gainſt the poſt exonerating:
Or, though I think I make it ſhake,
I ſhall not ſhortly ſtart and wake.
Why, Sir, laſt night, in my firſt ſleep,
I, at my ſpigot end, did weep;
(Obſerve, when ſtomach too replete is,
I'm ſubject to your diabetes;

Which

Which, though the bed it will beſmear,
Is ſweeter than your diarrhœa.)
I ſay, I ſtood againſt the wall,
And ſaw and heard the water fall;
It could not be behind the curtain,
So well convinc'd was I, and certain:
But more to prove it to the million,
I wrangled with my own poſtillion,
Dar'd the beſt man that e'er wore head
To prove that I then p--t the bed.
And yet, for all my fending feats,
Molly was forc'd to change the ſheets;
At leaſt, ſo did I after deem,
For ſo depos'd my waking dream.
But which was right, or which was wrong,
To your Logicians doth belong,
From Mr. Minor and Mr. Major,
By conſequent, or elſe by wager,
Theſe doubts and darkneſs to diſpel;
For I'll be d——d if I can tell.

Again---I dreamt one night before,
As I was ſtanding at my door,
A woman came---a frightful figure---
And of a piſtol held the trigger;
Her hands were bloody---ſhe would enter,
And, as I follow'd, to prevent her

From ſtrangling my beloved Nancy,
She ſtriding forward, to my fancy,
Juſt then, as I with fear was fainting,
I look'd and found her head was wanting.
And now my courage had forſook me,
Another terror overtook me.
Inſtead of Nancy's maſſacre,
I found that I had murder'd her;
For, being headleſs, it was plain
She had by ſomebody been ſlain;
So dreading to be left i' th' lurch,
I made a ſkip to top o' th' Church,
And on the ſteeple ſat me down,
And laugh'd, and look'd about the town.
Here I was ſeiz'd a-new with fright;
For, meditating on the height,
And ſeeing nothing on the wall
That I could catch to ſave my fall,
I found, by calculation true,
As I look'd down, and took a view,
E'er I could light in ſtreets or lanes,
'Twas odds that I daſh'd out my brains.
Now for a moment I forgot
If I had being, or had not;
Then found myſelf upon my feet,
And walking up a ſpacious ſtreet:

But, ere I could proceed much further,
Was taken up, and hung for murder;
To Sweeps and Sandmen did exhibit
A body dangling to a gibbet.
And now, I was not only vex'd,
But, ſomehow, damnably perplex'd,
To think, on finding I was dead,
What I ſhould do to get my bread;
But in the midſt of all this thrall,
I jump'd from thence to Surgeon's Hall:
Where I beheld a row of fellows,
That juſt were taken from the gallows;
Ill-looking, ragged, vile companions,
And ſtrung all round like ropes of onions;
By wires hung pendant, as their wont is,
'Tween *os occipitis et frontis*.
And here, inſtead of being diſſected,
I ſee thoſe operations acted.
My *perinæum* ſhrinks to note 'em;
I clap my hand upon my *ſcrotum*,
And view, the while my fleſh doth quiver,
Now this man's heart, then that man's liver.
No mortal yet, by day or night,
Ever beheld more ſhocking ſight.
Yet they're alive, nor are they ſcreaming,
But wrangling, ſinging, and blaſpheming,

From mouths that with moſt ghaſtly grin,
Tobacco take, and beg for gin.
And here, amidſt this ſcene of terrors,
I feel inſufferable horrors;
I fly, oppreſs'd with dreadful gloom,
To every corner of the room:
From this man ſtart, and jerk from t'other,
Then bob my back againſt another
Swifter than ball in Tennis-court,
'Till Nature can no more ſupport,
But ſhrieks with violent agitation,
And, waking, ſays---its ſuffocation:
Or ſwears ſome fiend her reſt was troubling,
Some Night-mare, Witch, or glum Hobgoblin.
One other viſion give me leave,
Among my arguments, to weave.
I went one night, about eleven,
To bed---or, rather---went to Heaven.
'Twas in the latter end of ſpring,
My heart was light as Wood-lark's wing;
My health was good, my ſpirits better,
My mind without a ſingle fetter;
By cares nor croſſes was I teaz'd,
Nor ſpleen, nor paſſion, on me ſeiz'd:
I mean to ſay, I felt, juſt then,
What happineſs is call'd, by men.

I cannot give ſufficient cauſe,
I only know that ſo it was;
And that ſuch feelings, as it ſeems,
Do gen'rate moſt delightful dreams.
I went to bed, then, thus diſpos'd,
And, as I gueſs, not long had doz'd
Before I fell, by ſome bleſt chance,
Into a kind of heav'nly trance;
Unconſcious I of ſleep or bed,
No pillow now ſupports my head,
Nor bolts, nor bars, nor walls reſtrain,
Nor heavy limbs my ſoul detain;
But, gliding on, by ſwift degrees,
I ſeem to be where'er I pleaſe:
I lightly leap o'er brook, or briar,
And ſtep—as far as I deſire.
Anon, on lofty hill I ſtand,
View the green corn, and furrow'd land;
See mountain, valley, wood and mead,
And ſhepherd ſtray, and cattle feed;
And diſtant hills, and waters ſpy,
That glitter pleaſure to the eye;
While the ſweet landſcape doth unite
Innumerous objects of delight.
Then, quick as thought, they inſtant take
The form of an extenſive lake,

In amphitheatre capacious,
A flat of waters, bright and ſpacious,
Which Fancy quickly ſcatters o'er
With iſlands, towns, and many a ſhore,
Where verdure ſmiles, and men are ſeen,
And happy Nature plays ſerene.
Here, while I view the water's gleam,
I find myſelf amid the ſtream;
And, as the gentle current glides,
My active thought my body guides
To ſhip or ſhore, now there, now here,
Sportive and undiſturb'd by fear;
And, as the waters we embrace,
I vagrant roam from place to place:
And, as I lave each happy limb,
And ſtrike, and dart, and lightly ſkim,
I think, good God! how well I ſwim!
While thus ſupine I lie, anon,
I twinkle, and the whole is gone;
The ſcene is chang'd, no more appear
Or ſhips, or towns, or iſlands, near.
No more the chryſtal waves are ſeen,
Two tow'ring mountains I'm between;
Prodigious in their height and ſize,
Their ſummits lie beyond the ſkies;

Their

Their magnitude new wonder brings,
From which a pleaſing grandeur ſprings;
Such vaſt immenſity before
The face of Nature never wore:
Nor e'er in me, till now did blend,
Such happy pow'rs to comprehend.

While down the winding vale I ſtray,
Upon an ivory pipe I play
A various and delightful lay.
My fingers touch as though they flew,
Each note's ſo ſweet, and yet ſo new,
I play and liſten to the ſound,
From rock to rock I lightly bound;
Sweet echos ev'ry cavern fill,
While my agility and ſkill
A mixture breed of ſtrange ſurmize,
Of doubt, of pleaſure, and ſurprize!

Encourag'd by the paſt, I try
If it be poſſible to fly:
When, ſtrange to think, with utmoſt eaſe
I ſail adown the pleaſant breeze.
Amazement new, and new demur,
Again, and yet again, recur.
Have I my former ſelf forgot?
Or is it me—or is it not?

Again

Again I try, again I find,
My body lighter than the wind;
Till, wanton grown, with joy and mirth,
I ſpurn the boſom of the earth;
Into the middle region mount,
And cities, ſeas, and kingdoms count:
Strait recollect, and now behold,
Whate'er I'ad read, or had been told.
My mind, my ſight, my ſoul, expand;
I view the near and diſtant land,
Each object ſee, examine all,
And underſtand both great and ſmall!
The freedom, too, with which I range
Is more extatic, than 'tis ſtrange.
When, as I high, and higher, fly,
Sudden appear, throughout the ſky,
Horſes and men in glittering arms,
And nought is heard but war's alarms:
The warm bright ſun, in ſplendant glances,
Plays quivering on their burniſh'd lances.
Yet as I view the ſhining ſteel,
No ſenſe of danger do I feel;
To win renown I now aſpire,
And glow with all the hero's fire;
My arm bears vict'ry, I preſage,
But, ere the armies can engage

I look again, when, lo! the hoſt
Is all in dancing meteors loſt!
Still Night appears, and Luna's beams,
And light ſhoots o'er the ſky in gleams.
But how ſhall I find words to tell,
What, William, after this befel?
Conceive me ſailing ſtill on high,
That, ſwifter than the winds, I fly;
That, now, I feel a tempeſt riſe,
In which I'm toſt about the ſkies,
Which are with clouds and gloom o'ercaſt,
A trumpet blows a ſolemn blaſt;
Then, in the murky hemiſphere,
Myriads of ſeraphim appear,
That all the heav'ns illuminate,
And joys, unfelt before, create.
They cry aloud---"THE GENERAL DOOM,
THE DAY OF RESURRECTION'S COME!"
And lo! as down my ſight I bend,
Th' inhabitants of earth aſcend!
In ſwarms they riſe, from lateſt time,
From ev'ry nation, ev'ry clime!
The quick and dead of ev'ry coaſt,
Now, ſmiling, meet the angelic hoſt!

All upward, now, their courſe purſue,
'Till heav'n itſelf appears in view !
'Till the fam'd muſic of the ſpheres,
Salutes our raviſh'd wond'ring ears !
But, William, juſt as I believe,
No pow'r can me of bliſs bereave---
Juſt as th' eternal gates unfold,
And, paſt conceiving, I behold
The glories I muſt ſoon partake---
William---juſt then---alas---I wake.
Suddenly, thus, my hopes were gone,
In leſs time than St. Paul's ſtrikes one !
And all, becauſe, ſuch was my lot,
Before I went to ſleep, god-wot,
A certain duty I forgot.
Thus, while I had my heavenly trances,
My Lady had her earthly fancies.
Thus, while I floated in the air,
She, reſtleſs, tumbling here and there,
With her ſharp elbow ſpoil'd my mirth,
And caſt me down from heav'n to earth.
Oh could I but, my friend, have tarried
In this bleſt place---but I was married---
And women, Will, are very loath
Men ſhould feel joys not felt by both.

Juſt ſo Eurydice, I've read,
Brought down her ſpouſe among the dead,
On earth ſhe would not let him dwell,
While ſhe was forc'd to live in Hell.

CANTO V.

CUZ', I've related all theſe viſions,
To help our logical deciſions;
From which I can't but draw concluſion,
That all is chaos and confuſion:
That I'm as well convinc'd each night
As the next day, that I am right:
In walking can no more confide
Than when on "wings of winds I ride."
The conſequence of which I take, is,
That, whether man aſleep or 'wake is,
His happineſs, whate'er it ſeem,
Is full as falſe as any dream.
How often, pray, are we miſtaken,
When we conclude we're really waking?

How

How often does each ſimple buſtard
Firmly believe rice-pudding cuſtard?
And is not ev'ry term that's us'd,
Still, liable to be abus'd?
A relative that has no ſtandard,
That may mean *rear*, when it ſays *van*-guard?
What you intend by ſweet and ſour,
By ſhort and long, by day and hour,
Are but ſignificant, and true,
When felt by me as felt by you.
You may affirm the ven'ſon ſweet,
I ſwear it is not fit to eat.
Some liquorice love, and others lacker
Their grinders with quid of tobacco.
Your birds of paſſage fly, with eaſe,
From land to land, acroſs the ſeas;
From Dover Cliff to th' church at Dieppe,
Your ſwallows ſay is but a ſtep;
But aſk a ſnail, or ſlow-worm, either,
How long they'd be in crawling thither.
In Lapland, if I'm told aright,
Summer is day, and Winter night:
Then how can you in terms be clear,
If half a day be half a year?
Whatever may be ſaid at college,
SENSATION is the ſource of knowledge;

Our

Our tongue, eyes, noſe, and ears perceptive,
Taſte, colour, ſmell, and ſound make captive:
Theſe bring the various wares they deal in,
And ſtock their great emporium FEELING;
But then they're all ſo curſt conceited,
They everlaſtingly are cheated:
Are ſo deceiving, and deceiv'd,
They ne'er deſerve to be believ'd;
So ſimple are, and void of art,
They'll take the verieſt juggler's part;
Wou'd Breſlaw help, them to trepan, Sir,
Then hang him for a necromancer.

William, whoſe tongue began to itch,
Thought he, who ſuch attention paid
To ev'ry thing Sir Thomas ſaid,
Might be allow'd to make a ſpeech;
Then, with a look a little ſly,
Return'd the Knight this anſwer dry.

Men, Sir, may play you very odd tricks,
Who have but ſmall ſkill in dioptrics;
Ev'n I, here, ſimple as I ſtand,
Can make the ſhadow of my hand
Spread over many a rood of land;
For, place a candle out, at night,
Your trav'ler, oft, its twinkling light

Will fix his diſtant, longing eyes on,
While it illumes the whole horizon.
But let me curve my hand around it,
The light's all loſt, and who hath found it?
Why, Sir, my hollow palm, 'tis plain,
Doth miles and miles of light contain;
And, moſt ungenerous too, doth hide
The weary wand'rer's hope and guide.
By which you mean to hint, no doubt,
I've put your farthing candle out;
Or at the beſt, my couſin comrade,
What light you have I would obumbrate.
But I can prove, by reading Clerkly,
From Leibnitz, Malbranche, Bayle, and Berkley,
Things far more ſtrange, friend Will, than theſe;
Can prove, whenever you ſhall pleaſe,
The mite is larger than the cheeſe.
That, howſoever you ſuppoſe,
You do not walk behind your noſe;
That there's not water, in the ſea,
Enough to make a diſh of tea;
That, when he drinks, your guzzling ſot
Don't touch the handle, or the pot;
Nay, more, can prove, without your candle,
There's neither drink, ſot, pot, or handle.

Your

Your Philomath, with philology,
Quoth Will, I grant, doth often dodge ye
At hide and ſeek, Sir, intellectual,
To make your errors more effectual;
'Mong A's and B's ſo ſnug will hide him,
Tho' you look near him, and beſide him,
Tho' fifty times you've round him gallop'd,
So cloſe, in myſtery, he's invellop'd,
That, tho' by hearing him, you wind him,
The devil a bit, Sir, can you find him.
My underſtanding ſo obtuſe is,
I own, I cannot find the uſes
Of all theſe arguments, to ſhew
We nothing are, and nothing know.
Were oracles by Wiſdom utter'd,
Still we muſt think our bread is butter'd,
Whatever Sceptics may imagine us,
When tongue and fingers are ol'aginous;
And, for this part o'th' argument,
I quote from you, Sir, precedent;
" Theſe things, to us, are not ideal,
With Fancy every thing is real."
For, what to me, Sir, would it matter,
Altho' my wine were really water,
If, as it trickled down my gullet,
It gave me mirth, and pleas'd my palate?

Nay, ſure, Sir, 'twould be very rude,
Or worſe, 'twould be ingratitude,
If, while I drink it, at your table,
I ſhould affirm 'twere nought but fable.
Your learned folks are, oft, ſuch fools,
And know ſo little of their tools,
When they chop logic, ſilly elves,
They're apt to hack and hew themſelves.
Whence ſome deduce, from proofs like theſe,
That ign'rance is a bleſt diſeaſe;
That he who after knowledge lingers
But graſps a flame, and burns his fingers;
And his ambitious folly ſhews,
Like whelps that yelp, and run at crows.

Hark you, friend Will, you're laſt ſuggeſtion
Is quite on my ſide of the queſtion.
Since ignorance is deſpicable,
And makes, who has it, one o'th' rabble:
And learning is, ſtill, ſomething worſe;
You've form'd one comprehenſive curſe,
More vaſt, and certain, to engulph us,
Than that erſt utter'd by Ermulphus.

The more we ſearch, the more we find,
We're feeble, fooliſh, vain, and blind;
This only certain ſeems to be,
We're all abſurd uncertainty.

Our

Our joys are falſe, and falſe our tears,
Falſe are our hopes, and falſe our fears.
Our pleaſure, like the rainbow, ſhews
Then only beauteous when not cloſe;
Tho', glorious in its ſhining birth,
It ſeems to reach from heav'n to earth,
Approach to touch it, and you'll ſee
'Twill vaniſh in nonentity!
I own, ſaid Will, I'm at a loſs,
You preſs the point ſo very cloſe;
You ſcarely can be contradicted,
Yet I don't wiſh to be convicted;
For, tho' with you I cannot cope,
So much my int'reſt 'tis to hope
The joys my young imagination
Foretold ſhould follow, in rotation,
Each after each, as life advances,
Were truths,---I'm loth to think them trances.
But, granting all as falſe and vain
As meteors, caus'd by ſun and rain,
Tho' *active* pleaſures ſhould beguile 'em,
Men may in *paſſive* find aſylum.
You, Sir, whoſe well-provided boat,
Bleſt Independence keeps afloat,
While ſhe thus condeſcends to ſteer,
What tempeſts have YOU, Sir, to fear?

She, with expert and jocund crew,
Weathers all winds that ever blew.
Should tow'ring Pride contemptuous think her,
And make her ſtrike, It could not ſink her;
Malice may ſhoot, but cannot ſhake her;
Lame Poverty can ne'er o'ertake her;
While Labour, Learning, Genius, all
Are ever ready at her call;
Happy, by her, to be employ'd,
Thrice happy if, by her, enjoy'd.
From whence you argue, Couſin Will,
At leaſt, we're eaſy, when we're ſtill.
That, when kind heav'n has ſent us meat,
We've only to ſit down and eat.
But, when the paſſions are in chace,
It, then, may prove a ſilly race.
Like as the *hind*-legs of a hound
May run o'er many a league of ground
To catch the *fore*---but they're miſtaken---
When they lie down they're overtaken.
Whence, I conjecture, you profeſs
That apathy is happineſs;
That he, whoſe wiſhes breed no riot,
Is comfortable, good, and quiet.
To ſuch a one I'd grant, at moſt,
He's juſt as happy as a poſt.

His goodneſs, likewiſe, be it ſaid,
Is like a wife's without her head;
Who, tho' her humours never teize you,
Her kiſſes are not like to pleaſe you:
For ſhe, 'tis held, who has no mouth,
Will neither kiſs, nor quench her drowth.
For this, friend William, I contend,
Better had man his being end,
And die at once, ſince die he muſt,
Than, with inanity, to ruſt.
Better, than thus to mope and doze,
Feel pangs from fingers down to toes.
Better, than thus to ſit hum drum,
Like country ſchoolmaſter become,
Who hammers at each ſtupid cub,
To teach him ab, eb, ib, ob, ub---
And, midſt a ſquawling, wrangling crew,
Doth everlaſtingly purſue
His d——d dull ba, be, bi, bo, bu.

C A N T O VI.

YET ſure, ſaid Will, Sir, ſome of thoſe
Whom Fame, as Nature's wonders, ſhews;
Who, high in honours, high in birth,
Rever'd for ſacred virtue's worth;
Whoſe deeds, deſcent, and merits are
Held equally renown'd and rare;
Or thoſe whoſe fortunes ſome bleſt chance
Conſpir'd with Genius to advance;
And gave, what Genius deems his due,
A ſeat among th' immortal few;
Sure thoſe brave ſpirits, who, when fled,
Were ever call'd the mighty dead;
Whoſe actions grace the ſcroll of Fame,
Sure thoſe to happineſs had claim.

And, 'tis an axiom, long in uſe,
Like cauſes like effects produce.
From whence, friend Will, you would infer,
Some men *are* bleſt, becauſe ſome *were*.
But this wont paſs, my cunning ſtager,
Imprimis, I deny your major.
Theſe mighty dead, of whom you puff,
And think you ne'er can brag enough;
Nor your trull Fame (whoſe cheeks are bloated
Like bladders, on which boys have floated)
Stuft out and cramm'd with lies enormous,
About her ſlaſhing, ſwaſhing Hectors,
Her grim Mandragons--Pluſquamperfectors,
Of ſuffering man the curſt diſſectors,
But who's more ſilent than a dormouſe
Concerning private worth and action;
Or, if ſhe ſpeak, ſpeaks in detraction;
Theſe bull-fac'd, brazen-headed Meſſieurs,
Wholeſale and retail human graziers;
Theſe man-fleſh butchers, with their fly-flops,
Theſe Anthropophaginian Cyclops,
That tap who never had the Hydrops,
Theſe Caco-dæmons, I maintain, Sir,
Of whom both ſhe and you are vain, Sir,
As ſubject were to flux, or cancer,
As you, or I, or any man, Sir:

As

As liable to puke, and be ſick,
When they were order'd to take phyſic;
As much would ſcratch and writhe and groan,
At itch, gripes, gravel, gout, or ſtone;
With ſcrew'd-up phiz would grunt and twiſt---Oh la!
When they were cutting for a fiſtula;
Would faint as ſoon if, for a ſcotomy,
The Doctor ſhould preſcribe phlebotomy;
As much would caper, curſe, and kick,
When needle under nail did ſtick;
As much were tortur'd by brain-tumours,
I mean as captious in their humours,
Would fret and fume, and be as fractious,
As drunken chymney-ſweeps or blackſhoes;
Would break the crockery, ſpill the grey peas,
And cuff their wives, and whip their babies,
Burn tables, ſtools, and chairs to cinders,
And toſs the houſe out at the windows;
Would pinch, bite, ſcratch, ſnarl, ſcold or ſquabble,
Like Billinſgate or Ragfair rabble.

Methinks I hear one of theſe heroes,
Who little better were than Neros,
Wrangling with Ma'am, and domineering,
Bullying at this, at that thing ſneering,
Cry--"D---n your pudding--d---n your beef,
" And d---n your ſobbing, ſniveling grief;

" Damme I'd rather munch a dry cruſt
" Alone, than live with you on pie-cruſt;
" For neither you, your ſoup, or ſallad,
" Are made at all to pleaſe my palate."
If Ma'am replies, he lays the laſh on,
And, with his hair erect, with paſſion,
Out iſſues he, brimful of ire,
Snorts ſwords, breathes brimſtone, and ſpits fire,
Snuffs gunpowder, rips up red coats,
Cuts you ſome fifty thouſand throats,
Leaves not a rat, cat, hog, or dog an eye,
But cleaves them as you'd cleave mahogany;
Vineyards and fields devours in malice,
And quaffs hot blood in ſcull-ſcoop'd chalice:
Then vaunts his moſt pernicious pranks,
And looks dead who don't give him thanks:
Annihilates Tuum and Meum,
Commands the prieſt to chant Te Deum,
And, like Drawcanſir, bluffly ſwears,
" All this he does, becauſe he dares."
Good Sir, ſaid Will, I ne'er ſuppos'd
Content, by ſuch folks, was engroſs'd.
Far other men were in my gueſs,
Whom every age and people bleſs;
Who uſeful arts the nations taught,
Or who for Freedom bravely fought;

Who, firſt, with ploughſhare, broke the glebe,
Or paſs'd the ſhuttle thro' the web;
He who conducted lovely Truth
And Science to the haunts of Youth,
Aptly their pleaſing lore convey'd,
And all their wond'rous gifts diſplay'd.
Of ſuch I ſpoke---or he whoſe ſong
Charm'd and reform'd the liſtening throng.
Who, as the ringing harp he ſwung,
Rais'd his ſweet voice and rapid tongue
In phraſe moſt fit, and lofty verſe,
The deeds of heroes to rehearſe!
(Of heroes, who, by Virtue claim'd,
Among th' immortal Gods are nam'd)
Who, as along the numbers roll'd,
The laws of Nature could unfold!
Or with a ſad and piteous tale
The man of iron could aſſail;
Or, when Oppreſſion durſt provoke,
In thunder to the paſſions ſpoke!
Their headlong rage would ſtrait controul,
"And freeze and harrow up the ſoul!"
How oft, friend Will, reply'd the Knight,
Am I oblig'd to ſet you right;
Again repeating, and again,
Men ever were, and will be men?

Why muſt I tell you, no man, yet,
That Eve and Adam could beget,
(This to your memory pray recall,
Adam and Eve begat us all;
For, in their primary endeavour,
World without end, for ever and ever,
The blacks and whites, and thoſe of copper,
Were ground out of our Granny's hopper.
Such is the orthodoxy dixit,
And d-----d be he who contradicts it.)
No man is freed from Fate's miſchances,
Except in novels and romances:
The brighteſt characters have blots;
The ſun itſelf is full of ſpots:
Which, as I gueſs, ar'n't very young,
Yet have not been diſcover'd long.
In fact, our eyes are oft ſo feeble,
They'd overlook the pariſh ſteeple;
And tho' ſent forth to ſearch and mind it,
Return and ſay they could not find it.
You ſee theſe folks thro' a dark lantern,
And ſtill, moſt carefully, your hand turn,
Full on each face to throw the light,
Then wonder how it came ſo bright.
So once a painter, in ſuppoſes,
The radiance drew of grandſire Moſes;

And

And, when he'd done, ſo ſays the ſtory,
Fell down and worſhipp'd his own glory:
But (for a Chriſtian cuckolds ſcorns)
He quite forgot to add the horns.
Tho' Jews, with reverence be it ſpoken,
Hold horns a magiſterial token;
Which is the reaſon, ſay the witty,
Why Jews do moſtly live i'th' city.
But to our text—I ſay, once more,
All's not divine that men adore.
Your Germans bow to Jacob Behmen,
Your Greeks, Sir, reverence Philopæmon.
Saint Januarius keeps, at Naple,
A market where he's always ſtaple.
Your Ruſſian is tied down to th' grindſtone
Of Nicholaſes holy mill-ſtone.
Some love th' eleven hundred virgins;
Your Jews and Turks are circum-ſurgeons:
And he who dares be het'rodox,
Had better get the plague, or p-x.
For prieſts in all lands preach and pray,
Not to convince, but get the day,
Or, what is better ſtill, the pay:
And tho' ſome bid each humble brother,
When ſmote on one cheek, to turn t'other,

Oppos'd

Oppos'd themſelves, they ſtill incline 'em
To *Argumentum Bacculinum*:
And he's puff'd down, who their fine flams ſcorns,
Like Jericho, at blaſt of rams-horns.
Will ſtar'd, and cry'd, Sir, whither verge you?
You're not a foe ſure to the Clergy!
That, Will, depends on circumſtances,
I'm no man's foe who peace advances;
Who, mild and gentle, ſtrives to win,
Not *to* opinion—but *from* ſin:
Who, like the Parſon of old Dryden,
Would ſcorn Oppreſſion's back to ride on;
Who can ſuppoſe a Turk may be
Almoſt as good a man as he,
And that opinions with ſalvation
Are not allied, in any nation;
That, tho' a man were ſo abſurd
As not to b'lieve a ſingle word
O'th' ſtuff with which ſome folks are cram'd,
There yet are hopes he may'nt be damn'd.
Or, let's ſuppoſe what's ſtill abſurder,
Since ſuppoſition is no murder,
One who has faith in all the fictions,
The fables, lies, and contradictions
That e'er were broach'd from Folly's mouth,
Between the North pole and the South;

Who'd

Who'd worſhip Molock, God of Ammon,
Or dance to Tomtom round Ramraman;
Pay Mumbo-jumbo adoration,
Hold Pawaws in vaſt veneration;
Believe i'th' navel-ſtring of Brama,
Eat holy dung of Dalay Lama;
Credit the tale of St. Gelaſias
As much as Creed of Athanaſius;
Reſolving to have faith in all,
Leſt men him heretic ſhould call;
The Prieſt who'd hope my love to win,
Muſt think e'en this no mortal ſin:
With points of doctrine muſt diſpenſe,
From who've too much or little ſenſe,
Provided they to others do
As they wiſh to be done unto:
Muſt ſtill preſerve that ſimple plan
Which his meek Maſter firſt began;
On human hearts muſt make invaſion
By gentleneſs, and mild perſuaſion;
Nor think to cure the mind of maggots
By purging it with fiery faggots:
Nor muſt pretend, if me he'd pleaſe,
To ſupernat'ral extaſies;
But muſt be as ſincere as kind.
This brings an anecdote to mind,

Con-

Concerning an irreverend Friar,
Miracle-monger, therefore liar;
A relic juggler, moſt rapacious;
Of life luxurious and ſalacious,
Who watch'd a wooden virgin's ſhrine,
And was, by fools, ſuppos'd divine.
It chanc'd, one Summer, where he dwelt,
The heavens did not that year melt,
As uſual, in refreſhing ſhowers,
To chear the thirſty, languid flowers;
Hence, 'twas much fear'd, the gaſping earth
Would feel a univerſal dearth.
Hence, too, did ſelfiſh Superſtition
To heav'n ſend many a vague petition;
But, in the midſt of this her grief,
Our Friar promis'd her relief;
If to his ſhrine ſhe'd make proceſſion,
The clouds ſhould, likewiſe, make emiſſion;
For ſo, ſaid he, the holy mother
Has told me, your unworthy brother.
Well, Sir,—the farce is underta'en,
When lo! it ſtrait begins to rain;
A Miracle! the people cry,
A Miracle! reſounds on high.
The gaping crowd run here and there,
And tell of angels made of air;

Trot home for off'rings not a few,
To pay old ſcores as well as new;
And, as they bring their glad oblations,
Recount their many obligations;
And how the Virgin did inſpire,
With prophecy, her holy Friar;
While he applauds his dext'rous wit,
And laughs to think how fools are bit.

You aſk how he could here deceive:
I'll tell you, if you'll give me leave.
Not by his faith did he foretell,
His want of faith did juſt as well.
His luſt, and former fornication,
Supplied the place of Revelation.
For nought of Heav'n, or Hell, more true is,
Than that the Friar had a Lues,
Of ten years ſtanding at the leaſt,
Which us'd to twinge the unclean beaſt;
And taught him, from his pangs, to gather
Prognoſtics of a change of weather.
Which cheat this reverend, chaſte divi e,
Diſcover'd to his concubine;
And ſhe, being tickled with the joke,
Told it to all with whom ſhe ſpoke;

While thoſe who heard, fail'd not to ſcoff it,
And ſay the p--x had made a prophet.
You ſeem to wonder where I'll end,
And whither all theſe windings tend:
I'll tell you, Will, they form a mirror,
That ſhews men loſt in fogs of error.
They tend to prove my firſt poſition,
THAT HAPPINESS IS ALL A VISION;
A ſhadow which men keep in view,
That runs as faſt as they purſue,
Stands when they ſtand, winds when they wind,
Sometimes before, ſometimes behind,
At all attempts to catch it mocks,
And ne'er was brought t'an Equinox:
At no one moment would allow
A man to ſay---*I have thee now.*
They tend to ſhew, that life, at beſt,
As ſaith Dan Gay, is but a jeſt;
A candle, where freſh tumors ſprout,
Which, to remove, is oft ſnuff'd out
By Law or Honour, Rope or Sword,
As Judge or General gives the word:
And he has ſure a lucky ſnuffing,
Who's cropt from cradle into coffin.

And ſhould you think theſe doctrines vain,
Hear, Will, the moral they contain.
So ſhort a time are mortals twirl'd
About this tranſitory world;
(For he who tarries longeſt in it
Can ſcarce be ſaid to live a minute)
So little do we truly know,
What ſhall bring future weal or woe;
Such trifles are the things we prize,
In Truth and ſober Reaſon's eyes;
So futile and incompetent,
To make one bleſſing permanent;
That he who'd ignominious live,
For any good this world can give;
Would condeſcend to recollect
The loſs of Worth, and Worth's reſpect;
Or, to obtain ſome private end,
To guilt, or meanneſs could deſcend,
And act, from ſelf-applauſe exempt,
What ſinks him into ſelf-contempt;
Could ſee how ſhort, how vague, how vain
Are joys, and all that joys contain;
Yet, ſeeing this, could be betray'd,
Doth Common-ſenſe ſo much degrade,

Such

Such ample infamy deſerves,
If he with ſuch conviction ſwerves,
No epithet, by man expreſs'd,
That Wit or Malice can ſuggeſt,
Or ſcurril Rancour e'er devis'd,
Can ſay how ſuch a fool ſhou'd be deſpis'd.

THE END.

Page 29, line 7, for *badſt* read *bade*.
Page 46, line 13, for *we* read *me*.